



NEWS & INFORMATION

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Lifeline Awareness Week: Iowans need not be without telephone service

Too many eligible Iowans are unaware of financial assistance to help them afford and maintain telephone service. Many Iowans also don't know this assistance may be applied to a cell phone. Lifeline Awareness Week, September 12-18, informs people that this help is available and is easy to receive.

In a Lifeline Awareness Week Proclamation, Governor Terry Branstad cites the importance of all Iowans being connected to emergency services and resources that can improve and save lives.

Lifeline helps qualified households by reducing telephone bills up to \$10 per month. A part of the program called Link-Up reduces home phone service connection fees by either \$30 or half of the fees, whichever is less. This program also lets consumers borrow up to \$200 for connection fees, interest-free, for up to one year. Households that participate in any of the following may qualify for this help: Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income Program, Federal Public Housing Assistance Program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program, or the National School Lunch Program. People may also qualify if their income is at or below 135 percent of federal poverty guidelines. For example, an Iowa family of four would qualify if their annual household income was below \$30,174, while a one-person household would qualify with an annual income under \$14,703.

Applying for Lifeline/Link-up assistance is easy. Simply return a completed application form, available from participating telephone service providers, to your chosen provider. Ask your provider of choice if it is a Lifeline participant or find Lifeline service providers under the Low-Income tab at www.usac.org, which also has other information about these telephone assistance programs. Also, many wireless telephone service providers are now authorized to provide these discounts should you want or need a cell phone instead of a landline phone. People may also sign up for this telephone assistance automatically when applying for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at their local community action program (CAP) office. There are CAP offices in all 99 Iowa counties. Applications for LIHEAP are accepted between October 1 and April 15 annually. Once enrolled in the Lifeline telephone assistance program, it is only necessary to complete and return any periodic eligibility verification forms received to continue receiving monthly assistance.

To learn more about Lifeline and Link-Up, contact your local telephone company. You may also contact the Iowa Utilities Board toll free at 1-877-565-4450. The IUB Web site, <http://iub.iowa.gov>, has more information and an application form. Another information resource is www.lifeline.gov.

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